The Indian Stage

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OUR LOOKOUT.

THE BANE OF ANACHRONISM.

The question of observing historical accuracy on the stage deserves the attention of lovers of the Indian Drama, and too much emphasis cannot be laid on its necessity in a country where grotesque anachronisms are a very common feature. It must however be granted that the spirit of the faddist must not be allowed to regulate its operation. Historical accuracy must always be subordinated to the nature of the impression produced in the modern spectator. In staging *Julius Cæsar* it is not his Roman contemporary that we aim at pleasing but the educated citizen of the twentieth century. If there should be no rude shock to his tastes, if he be not provoked by any piece of furniture, decoration or dress, strangely inconsistent with Roman life and civilisation the stage-manager should have done what is expected of him. But it is certainly painful to notice the absence of any such attempt in this country, where sometimes every positive encouragement is afforded for a flagrant violation of historical accuracy. An ancient Hindu King struts on the stage with socks and boots of the most approved western fashion, a high military collar surmounting his jewelled neck, and the stiff cuffs of a glazed shirt protruding through the sleeves of his gorgeous coat. A princess of the Lunar race, a character in the story of the *Mahabharata*, reclines on an English sofa, and glances at the Parisian novelties on her table with an air of familiar appreciation. Hindu Courtiers enter the presence of their King in the costume of mediæval Italian dandies or shake hands in the most cordial fashion when they meet their friends. A smart Japanese screen separates two lovers at a secret meeting in a city on the Jumna which existed more than two thousand years ago—it is unnecessary to recount the numerous absurdities into which the Indian Stage has fallen. Suffice it to say there must no longer be the ugly sight of modern finery intruding into an ancient atmosphere. Such incongruities strike at least the cultured Spectator instinctively and produce the same effect as a mutilated piece of sculpture or a hideous patch of colour on a fine piece of painting. With the recent advances in Indian Art it must be easily possible to create the necessary local colour in all the vividness of historical truth. Furniture in pure Indian design can be studied even in Madras, in the School of Arts and in the Victoria Technical Institute. An acquaintance with the new school of painting in Bengal, and with the reproduction of masterpieces in painting belonging to the Moghul School which are now being brought to light can effect a revolution in these directions. A knowledge of Indian History in detail will form a valuable aid for the regulation of this aspect of the stage. Every effort must be made to put an end to these incongruities, without at the same time making the stage deteriorate into an insipid dulness by a too enthusiastic application of these principles.

POETRY AND THE WORLD'S WORK

BY J. H. MACKINTOSH, B.A., PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH, PRESIDENCY COLLEGE.

The opinion was once very widely held and expressed, that, as the trend of our modern civilization turned more and more in the direction of scientific progress and physical achievement, there would be less and still less scope for poetry as an element in the life of humanity. It was thought, that poetry had its roots in the faculty of wonder, and drew its nourishment only in an atmosphere charged with the element of mystery. We are growing so wise, the argument of our fathers ran, that wonder and mystery must soon cease to be; we know, they said, how things are done; we know the causes of the colours of the flowers, and a rainbow, after all, is a very dull affair; life is a mechanism and no longer a mystery, and as for the poets with their vague words and protentious long phrases, we have no more use for them. They were picturesque and appropriate, no doubt, in the dark ages, or in those desolate old cultures of Greece and Rome, but it seems the poor fools put trust in imagination or the like, and of course we bartered imagination for knowledge when we invented the steam-engine. Mystery was the food of poetry, our stock is exhausted, and the Muses, poor misguided wenches, may go starve.

Such, in the rough, was a very general feeling even among thinking-men about the middle of last century. Macaulay gives expression to it in one of his earlier essays, and other instances of this belief, or of something very like it, may be found in the literature of the period.

Since then, there has been a change in many respects. Few men, we may imagine, would subscribe to such an opinion in its entirety, and many of us, most perhaps of those who have ever troubled to think about the matter, would utterly refuse to entertain it. Why has there been this change in popular opinion, and why do we hesitate to admit that there may be the least grain of truth in a point of view which some circumstances seem to recommend, as, for instance, the apparent absence of outstanding poetic genius in the English-speaking world of to-day?

There are two main flaws in that point of view. The first, which was at all times obvious and is now widely recognised, lies in the fact that the progress of science and our advancing knowledge of physical processes of nature, have increased rather than decreased the mystery of life in many of its aspects. We have learned now that the light of science is no blazing illumination shining on a plane surface so that everything is revealed and naked to our eyes, but rather a flickering and elusive gleam playing upon tracts of infinite irregularities, where for every new corner that is made clear, a dozen new shadows start into being.

The second, which is more widespread, and greatly pernicious, is due to a misapprehension of the relation existing between poetry and the other divisions of life; a failure to recognise its real and serious import. To very many men and women poetry—and by poetry in this connection and throughout this essay, I mean not solely verse, rhymed or unrhymed, but all imaginative and creative literature, which exists for its own ends, and not to further some ulterior purpose—is a frivolty and

plaything, the occupation, like a gramaphone or a pianola, of an empty hour, to be valued, if at all, for the easy and mechanical jingling of its rhythms and its rhymes, or the equally mechanical solution of a Chinese puzzle plot.

That is not our view of poetry. It is impossible to imagine anyone belonging to a society formed for the better appreciation of literature who brings to it no greater purpose than that. But what, then, are we to think on this matter ? What relation exists between poetry and the great body of human interests and aspirations ? What relation does it bear to the theory and practice of living ?

Are we to consider poetry as the pleasing vehicle of moral and intellectual truth—the jam as it were, under which the pill of correct thinking is to be administered to resentful humanity ? Or is poetry a thing by itself, lonely and self-contemplative, dwelling apart from the ordinary pre-occupations of men ? Is it a refuge and a mere escape from the cares of reality, or should it be read as a commentary on the text of life ?

If an answer is to be found at all for these questions, we shall find it with the greatest certainty by glancing at the records of the past, by attempting to note what has been the due practice of some of the world's greatest workers in this medium. Not that we are to think that any poet of the first magnitude ever worked out a theory of poetry and then wrote up to it, but that from what we know of their writings it is possible to guess at the feelings on this matter which animated them, and to form an estimate of the degree in which these feelings were helpful or a hindrance to them in their work.

Let us first consider poetry as the vehicle and instrument of moral or intellectual truth. Exigencies of time compel us to be brief and uncritical in our methods, selecting our examples at haphazard, and subjecting them to no curious examination.

The greatest Latin poet called didactic was, it will be agreed by most competent to judge, Lucretius. His poem, the De Rerum Natura. 'Concerning the Nature of Things' is in effect an exposition of the origin of the universe and its order, as he conceived of it. It is therefore a typical example of a poem the proposed object of which is to inculcate intellectual truth in a pleasing form. What is the result ? The system which Lucretius expounds is made not only obsolete but almost ludicrous by the increase in scientific knowledge which has taken place since the 1st century B. C. A Board School child of to-day could correct the stupendous errors which are embodied in the content of the poem. But is Lucretius no longer read for this reason ? Is his book hounded out of libraries and condemned to the waste-paper basket ? We know that nothing of the kind has happened, and that, but for the decay in the knowledge of Latin, Lucretius would never have been more highly appreciated than at this day.

The 'De Rerum Natura' is now read not for the scientific theory in its content but for the poetic beauty of those passages which are least didactic in essence. The vehicle has survived that for which it was fashioned, the instrument has outlived the hand, long since dust, for which it was formed.

Take another instance. Milton's 'Paradise Lost' was intended undoubtedly by the author at the outset to be in part a

didactic poem. We cannot doubt this if we consider the circumstances of its composition, the subject that was chosen, and Milton's own definite statement of his purpose :—

'To justify the ways of God to man.'

What is the position now, after the lapse of two and a half centuries. Is it not the fact that the fragments of old-fashioned theology imbedded in the poem are estimated more lightly than any of the other elements which constitute it?

And still further testimony to the hostility which subsists between didacticism and the authentic spirit of poetry is forthcoming. In the free ardour of poetic composition Milton's didactic purpose was time and again abandoned. He is hurried by the exuberance of the creative impulse into amazing contradictions and incongruities. He compels us to open our hearts to Satan and deflects our sympathies from archangels, and with it all, it is just these passages of our author's glorious misconduct that are the admitted marvels of a marvellous poem, the outstanding and unforgettable splendours of *Paradise Lost.*

We shall come back presently for a little to this question of didactic poetry. For the moment let us turn to a phenomenon which is the very antithesis of this. From time to time in the history of literature the cry has been raised of 'art for art's sake'—a battle cry which has commonly had the rider or tag appended to it of 'Down with Mrs. Grundy.' With Mrs. Grundy we need not deal at present; we may remark in passing that in good poetry there is room neither for Mrs. Grundy nor for practical protests against that lady and her influence.

The root idea of art for art's sake has, however, its significance for us. It is evidently a cry which voices the feeling antagonistic to didacticism, a protest against the use of artistic, or for our purposes, literary, production as a medium for the expression of alien substance, moral, or intellectual, or of any other kind. So far so good. There is no need for us to quarrel with so eminently reasonable a proposition. But let us revert to the method which we applied to didacticism, and turn to the actual work which has been produced by the upholders of this theory.

In modern poetry, perhaps Swinburne and Rosetti are the two most obvious examples of this school. Both of them were eminently successful artists in their kind, and both were much more concerned with the artistic quality of their work than with any message which they proposed to convey to their fellowmen by means of it.

We read them both with pleasure, and if we read them with understanding, there is a genuine joy to be found in their metrical skill and the melodious interplay of their intricate verse. But is our satisfaction undiluted? Do we feel that we have been reading the best sort of pœtry? Is our imagination kindled and stirred and set in activity? Almost the universal experience of unprejudiced readers is that there is no such feeling of satisfaction to be found in them. On the contrary, although short passages of these writers may delight and astonish, the effect of a prolonged sitting with them is to produce weariness, and a burden of monotony, a sense, almost, of mental nausea.

To what cause can we ascribe this feeling? Is it not due to an excess of the formal

element in their poetry and to an over-insistance on the sensuous appeal to the ear?

Shakespeare's Macbeth, in his frenzy and despair compares life to—

'a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
signifying nothing.'

If that were our estimate of life we might be content with a form of poetry as empty; but as most of us are neither frenzied nor despairing, a consensus of experience seems to demand that any poem claiming to be great shall signify something. Neither the sound and fury, nor the music and the melody, are sufficient without that signification.

Neither of these schools of poetry, then, satisfies the highest demand that can be made, and is made. We saw that didactic poetry as such failed by reason of the excess of an alien element which had been imported into it. The poetry of the 'art for art's sake' men fails also by reason of excess—the excess of one element which to a point is necessary in all poetry, the element of the sensuous appeal to the ear.

Both kinds fail, by reason of excess, although the excess is in different directions. In the residium which exists and pleases us in both schools after the element of excess has been subtracted there must reside the quality or qualities essential to the nature of pœtry. That is to say, the relation which pœtry bears to the rest of life lies neither in didactic teaching nor, exclusively, in the purely sensuous appeal to the ear.

We said above that we had no quarrel with the theory of art for art's sake, and that it seemed in many ways an eminently reasonable proposition. In its first significance, and especially in so far as it is a protest against didacticism it is just and not subject to refutation. But like most epigrammatic definitions and battle-cries, it must be revised and enlarged if it is to be capable of a more general interpretation.

If we regard it in itself, and examine it in its practical application, it becomes plain at once that something is very much wrong. From this point of view, Art for Art's sake has, as a creed, just as much and just as little significance as 'Hats for Hats' sake' 'Cows for Cows' sake' or any similar absurdity.

A hat is nothing except in its relation to man, nor are cows of any practical importance except in so far as they serve to accommodate mankind. Nothing has an effectual existence apart from the consciousness of man, and nothing and no part of life is of importance to us except in so far as it is subservient to human purpose.

So if we are to understand by the phrase 'Art for Art's sake,' that art has special values peculiar to itself remote and abstract from the generality of human wants, we are simply failing to think clearly, and, as a result, enunciating the thing which is not.

If, on the other hand we mean when we use the phrase not to lay emphasis on the separation of art from human interests, but merely to recognise the fact that the appeal of art, and so of poetry which made is art, is on different lines and by different channels to those employed by ethics, for example, or religion, or exact science, we have laid our hands upon a truth which is essential to the just knowledge and appreciation of poetry.

What is this appeal which poetry makes and by what channels does it make it? Poetry presents to our consciousness not what is moral or immoral in ethics, and not what is true or untrue in exact science, but beauty considered absolutely and in the widest senses of the term—to include for instance the ugly, which may also at times be beautiful, as in tragedy. It makes this appeal through the æsthetic sensations—partly through the sense of the ear, as by melody, partly through the faculty of intellectual perception.

What do we mean by saying that poetry presents or reveals beauty to our consciousness? Is this appreciation of beauty an abnormal quality found only in poets and artists, a species, as it were, of inspiration permitted to them alone? On the contrary it is as common to all humanity as the faculty of adding 2 and 2 together and arriving at the total 4, or of recognising that to love one's kind is well and to murder, ill. In some men, no doubt, it is, like other faculties, more highly developed than in others, and these are our artists and our poets. But they would have no readers if this faculty were not common, for there is much truth in the saying that a man only gets from a book or a work the good that he brings to the study of it.

As to beauty itself, and the virtue of it, which is the objective of poetry, it has never been satisfactorily defined. Tentative suggestions, which seem to be in the right direction have been made, and they enable us to guess at some of the elements of it. The apprehension of unity behind a diversity of forms, for instance, certainly affects us as beauty, and from this arises the pleasure of rhyme and rhythm in poetry, and our pleasure in unity of action in dramatic poetry. That also which is highly characteristic affects us as beauty, and hence arises our pleasure in the heightened incidents of romance, and the colossal character types of drama.

Is it conceivable, then, that so integral a part of human life can ever be superannuated—one of the great trinity of ethic, and knowledge, and æsthetic, which form the tripod on which humanity rests? The question needs no answer. Our race cannot limp, docked of a limb for the remainder of its course.

There are even signs that in the future poetry, whether in the strict form of verse, or generally, as imaginative literature, may be called upon to play even a greater part in the world's work than in the past. Æsthetic sensibility, though the common property of mankind is, it would seem, slower and harder to develop than either ethic or science. Between the time of Sopholces and Plato and our own time there has been but barely perceptible advance in appreciation of the beautiful if we compare the greatest personalities of the two eras. But in the spread over wider human areas of an increased capacity for appreciating beauty the race may claim to have made some progress. And so poetry has more material to work upon.

Nor is any phenomenon in modern civilisation more remarkable than the complex development of individual consciousness that has taken place. The tendency is for each of us to have more, comparatively, of his personality buried beneath the surface, as it were. Underneath the exterior, the man of hates and desires, pre-occupied with his own interests and devoted to practical pur-

poses, there is another self, more complex now by far than was generally the case in earlier ages, meditating on a hundred problems, and regulating from time to time the outer self, and criticising him.

This contemplative latter-day creation within us must needs speak, when he speaks at all directly and not through the medium of the outer self, in the language of art and poetry, for his thought and his conceptions are often too subtle or too unseizable for the language of ethic or of science, and can only find expression in the form devoted to beauty in art, or in poetry.

In such wise, then, we may place poetry in its relation to the rest of life, and the never ceasing work of humanity. It is no mere escape and refuge from the stress of affairs, 'Haply to interpose a little ease' nor is it subservient to other departments of life. We estimate it too lightly even if we consider it as a commentary on existence. For it is neither a reflection, nor altogether an interpretation, but the very substance of all human activity, realised through a particular medium.

AUGUSTINE BIRREL ON ACTORS. II.

By P. Parthasarathi Iyengar,
B. A., B. L.

'Obiter Scripta' would be a more appropriate appellation than *obiter dicta* to the opinions expressed by the Rt. Hon. Birrel on the Actor. As in Law, so in Literature opinions claiming the title of *obiter dicta* have all the force of authority. But we are constrained to observe that in his essay we find a lack of that seriousness and depth of investigation that academic disquisitions of this type require. Nowhere do we find any attempt to portray the accomplishments of a sound actor, the talents that heighten the effects of his histrionic art, the mental and moral capacities that contribute to success, or the psychology of dramatic situations.

In the opening page of his essay we find Mr. Birrel slandering the actor in language that amounts to calling him a prig, a vain fop and a mean egotist. It is a fallacy to assume that on the stage there is anything like the best part or an indifferent part. Every actor is as important a factor in the concrete manifestation of life that takes place on the stage as any other actor. Each subserves the whole play. He hath no art that does not appreciate the significance and purpose of each of the dramatic characters that stage a play and it need hardly be said that it is not always that every actor would be found capable to act any part or that there is anything other than the ability to enliven the dramatic situation with realism that arrests the attention of the audience. It is true that there are some actors that try to make up for their deficiency in getting through their parts by brilliancy of wit or majesty of bearing. But that is a poor complement to a good actor and it only shows that the audience also lacks real critical taste.

The actor only creates a make-believe on the stage. The art of the stage lies in conveying all the emotion of the play by a system of make-believing. Nevertheless the spmpathy of the audience goes with the actor while he is on the stage, next with the part that he only takes upon himself. For the secret of success on the stage seems to be to forget that there is an audience to be pleased and that he (the actor) should identify himself with the part he is to act, and with the feeling of the particular situation that he is in,

There is absolutely no room for the actor's consciousness that he should arrest the attention of the audience, or that it would be relaxed when he is off the stage or that a particular situation has been invented for giving effect to particular words of his. All this would land him in absent-mindedness and in an awkward predicament. It is identification that makes for success on the stage. It is because the actor identifies himself with the part he acts that he is capable of stirring the sympathies of the audience. The sympathy very often extends to even outside the theatre with the actor that has caused a flood of emotion to pass. There is really a peculiar charm in an actor who has successfully suffered all the painful disappointments and the woeful catastrophe of Othello or any a Juliet on the stage winning by her ardent love the affections of her Romeo.

The drama as a form of literature has in common with poetry and fiction the ennobling of human life as its object and as an act it fulfils its object by concrete representation appealing to vision and imagination. But since the Elizabethan period, the best day of the dramatic art, the drama degenerated into a medium of sensuousness. Somuch so in the nineteenth century Matthew Arnold was bemoaning the decadence and appealed to a proper organisation of a national theatre. "In Dryden's time the drama was very far from that universal approbation that it has now obtained. The play-house was abhorred by the puritans and avoided by those who desired the character of seriousness or decency. A grave lawyer would have debased his dignity and a young trader would have impaired his credit by appearing in those mansions of licentiousness." So with Johnson and in *Burnet's History* we find "the play-houses in so dissolute a time were become nests of prostitution and the stage was defiled beyond all example." The puritans therefore set themselves against countenancing the theatre and it is because of their influence that for centuries to come the theatre had not received the encouragement of the middle classes. But then other influences began to work on the life and thought of the British people and as a medium of engaging life the theatre acquired popularity. The French influence was perhaps the keenest. Mr. Birrel bases his adverse criticism on the spirit of that bygone period and quotes in support of his view, the opinions of actors who lived miserable lives for want of patronage. There is still *no modern drama* in England. We are inclined to doubt if there is enough of love of art in England. For reading through the memoirs of the famous Russian actress Madame Modjeska as she is shortly called we find under the year 1880 her writing, "The Prince of Wales spoke to me about the drama. He said that the dramatic art was not yet in its full development in England. I suggested the founding of an endowed national theatre, such as all other countries in Europe possess. This answer was discouraging "do you think there is enough love for art in the Anglo-Saxon race to make the theatre a state affair";

But that the drama has of late assumed vast importance and has become one of the necessary elements of civilised life, none can deny. As an art it has a fascination for the people as it combines within itself the culture effects of literature, music and

painting literature, music and painting. By direct perception the drama sends waves of moral influence into the audience leavening their emotional and intellectual aspects of life with the virtues of resolution of good conduct and repentance for past folly. And no wonder, that Mathew Arnold wrote long ago that the *theatre is irresistible.*

THEATRES IN THE WEST.

BY DR. C. B. RAMA ROW, M. D.

In the eyes of the Western people, and not without considerable truth, nothing which is connected with civilization exists in the East and that whatever is, is, Western. If the great works of Kalidasa had not survived the vicissitudes of centuries which India has gone through we should have readily believed this. But speaking of theatres we have none of ancient construction to show to the world. But in the West, thanks to the archæologist, the old ruins have been restored and preserved. And at this moment one can see in Greece and Italy the ancient theatres in more or less complete state of preservation.

The modern theatres in the West are in form simple reproductions of the old Greek ideal. They are finely handsome structures constructed wholly of masonry, iron, and glass. They are lighted by electricity, and are absolutely fire proof. Attached to the theatre is a restaurant for the audience.

In the interior seats are fixed in tiers rising like steps one above the other, and in large theatres there are as many as a dozen on the 1st floor, about 8 in the 2nd, 6 in the 3rd, and in the highest 3. Opposite to this is the stage which has a dome-like roof to help in the propagation of sound-waves and in intensifying the sound. At the foot is the Orchestra with all the modern instruments of music playing in harmony there being 4 or 5 dozen artists playing at one tune.

Below the stage is a room with a trap-door through which the players vanish above, and wires from which the fairies are suspended. On either side are several rooms one set for the dressing of actors of each sex, one or machinery to work the scenery.

The seats are all covered with velvet, velveteen, leather, &c., The pillars are decorated with golden plates and cut stones of dazzling brilliancy. They are surmounted by small statues or busts of the greatest actors and poets. In modern theatres the stalls have gradually encroached upon and almost absorbed the pit.

The arrangement of boxes, stalls, balcony and gallery is such as to accommodate the largest number in the smallest space and give as commanding a view as possible for the upper classes.

The biggest music hall I saw in the West is Albert Hall in London built in honor of the late Prince Consort which can accommodate 14,000 people. And the most elaborate machinery in connection with the stage is in a hotel theatre in Paris by means of which the whole stage is turned on its own axis, a wooden platform with all the furniture screwed on it about 60 feet in diameter. But the most beautiful is the theatre attached to the hotel which is next the biggest Railway Station, Berlin. Here the roof is a large dome in which hundreds of coloured electric lights of many colours twinkle from above when all the lights in the hall are put out giving the whole place as close a resemblance as man can make it to the starry heavens.

In short all the theatres in the West are of one pattern all being smaller or larger, richer or poorer imitations of the great prototype the theatre of Dionysius in Athens. One country vies with another in making its public buildings as attractive as possible. Means of communication having so largely multiplied all but the poorest take a short holiday once a week and a long holiday once a year. To attract these merry-making people Railway companies compete with one another and offer return-tickets for one-third the usual fare for week-end trips that may be begun any time after Friday evening and completed before the next Tuesday morning. To meet this ever-increasing demand each town and each country puts together its highest resources and raises structures once useful, and attractive. All these theatres appeal to the largest number. But all the world is a theatre and that which sees all is the eye. It is a remarkable coincidence that the modern and ancient theatres are but poor imitations of this incomparable structure of God's make, the human eye. Being the great seer the arrangement of parts are reversed. The stage in theatres is a section of a smaller sphere attached to the bigger sphere which accommodates the seers. In the eye the section of the smaller sphere is in front, on it are focused the rays from all the objects performing the various tragedies and comedies of new dramas of life. The bigger sphere is the eye-ball in front of which is the self-acting screen the Iris with the staging mechanism of various structures.

It is wonderful how close the resemblance is and I am almost certain that if I can raise from his grave the architect who built the first theatre he would confess that he stole the idea from the mechanism of the divine theatre, *viz.*, the eye.

It is hoped that in the construction of theatres in the East, the finest products of the Western architects will be kept in mind.

OUR BOUQUET.

I

AMATEUR THEATRICALS.

The Stage Manager's Woes.

Coloma Quinta writes in the Madras Mail:

Almost every day during the hot weather one reads accounts of Amateur Concerts and theatricals at the Hill-Stations, but, if one is uninitiated, he casts scarce a thought to the poor Stage-Manager, to whom the papers inform us "great credit is due for organising the entertainment." I have already had several seasons' experience, and though after each successful entertainment I foolishly imagine that I have at last understood and am capable of coping with the various difficulties of stage-managing on the Hills, I fear that it needs more than the skill of a Perseus to overcome the hydra that besets the path of the amateur Stage-Manager. After my last summer's experience, I went up to Chatterghat quothing with the raven, and having taken a firm resolution to go very little to the Club and to derive as much benefit as possible from the air and scenery of the place. A day or two after my arrival, however, the lady who styles me her P. G. beamed affably at me across the breakfast table.

"Oh, Mr. Irvingtree," she said, "I hear you are thinking of getting up some theatricals."

"Oh no—not at all—nothing of the sort"—I began.

"Oh but you must; we want to be livened up a bit. We heard before you arrived that you are so good at this sort of thing, and we've been *quite* looking forward to your coming up. You mustn't disappoint us. You *will* get up something won't you?"

"Oh well—er—perhaps—"

"Ah, that's right. I'm *so* glad, and I *know* every one will be delighted to help."

I was angry with myself for letting my vanity be so easily flattered. However, as at lunch and at tea my hostess again referred to my proposed entertainment, I saw I was fairly in for it, and began to feel the old keenness taking hold upon me. I went to the Club in the afternoon and sat down beside the solitary figure of Mrs. Grigs, who was watching the badminton. She smiled encouragingly at me and told me quite irrelevently that her daughter had a lovely voice, and that her niece, Miss Lightfoot, did the skirt dance—those two young ladies smiled sweetly up at me from the badminton court. Just then Mrs. Heavington came panting up the hill to the Club and sank down at my other side.

"Oh, Mr. Irvingtree." she gasped before she had quite recovered her breath, "my daughter sings and dances, and does bits from comic opera, you know"—

"Really."

"Oh yes, she's simply, *splendid*, quite professional in fact."

Miss Primly, an old resident, took me aside and told me in confidence of a charity in which she was interested, and which was greatly in need of funds, while Mrs. Churchton did the same for a rival cause. I was then introduced to Miss Fresham, a *debutante* who had been hovering about, and who informed me that she was '*frightfully* keen on theatricals', and had 'acted quite a lot.'

"Indeed, where?" I asked.

"Oh—at school we used to do Shakespeare mostly—I didHubert once,and I have done *Lear* and *Macbeth* and *Richard II*, and most things—I like tragic parts best."

Every where I looked I met beaming faces and encouraging smiles, and by the end of the evening, had I been a young hand, I should have promised every mamma in Chatterghat that her daughter would be down for at least two turns on my programme. I kept my head, however, and beyond an interested 'Indeed,' or an incredulous "Really?" made no promises and exacted none. At the last moment of packing, in spite of my resolution, I had slipped into my portmanteau some copies of *Caste* and a book of "Plays Pleasant." I had always felt that I was for better things than *The Area Belle*, and *Turn Him Out*, and with quite the ardour of a novice in Hill tastes I determined to have a try at getting up something really good. Chatterghat was aghast at the idea.

"Something serious? Good gracious? It'll never go down! We've *never* had anything serious! Oh, Mr. Irvingtree don'ts for *goodness'* sake! We want to laugh! And besides, who can act a serious part? There's no time to learn a long play, what with picnics and Tournaments and all the rest on! *Do* have a Variety Entertainment! We always have a Variety Entertainment, and then everybody can take a part!"

With a groan I put back *Caste* and "Plays Pleasant," and went down to the Club to read over its stock of antiquated favourites. At last, with the calm egoism

of an Actor-Manager, I selected a play in which there was a fairly good part for myself and proceeded to distribute the other parts.

"Oh but, Mr. Irvingtree, we've had that before," said my hostess when I told her my choice, "I've seen it at least *three times* in Chatterghat."

I went back to the pile of tattered, well thumbed yellow books, and made another selection. "Good gracious! that's as old as the hills!" said my hostess, "we're quite tired of seeing it acted in Chatterghat."

I returned again to that nightmare of farces and comedies, but when at last I found that it was a case of the old man and his donkey, that Chatterghat was quite "fed up" with its customary entertainments, and yet would resent innovations, reverted to my first selection, and, buying it in the depths of my waist coat pocket determined that wild horses should not drag its title from me. My hostess had given me to understand that I would draw down endless wrath upon my devoted head if I did not give a part to Mrs. Passy, who had a local reputation "though she is n't a *bit* good and *always* forgets her part!" I sent a copy of the play to Mrs. Passay, pointing out the part (that of an elderly lady), which I wished, her to play, while Miss Fresham was to play the *ingenwe.* In an indignant reply, Mrs. Passay told me that she could not take any but the leading part, and unless Miss Fresham cared to change parts with her, she was afraid that she couldn't help in the theatricals. I went in despair to Miss Fresham, whose mother was vexed that she was to have an old lady's part, but luckily Miss Fresham herself did not mind. "I prefer to play an old part, I never can do a girl's part," she said with all the naivete of eighteen.

The two minor parts had to be given to young Griffin, who was "sweet" on Miss Fresham, and to Major Fogey, whom Mrs. Passay could not bear out of her sight. We arranged to have a rehearsal the next day and I sighed with relief as I felt that things were well on foot. I was at the Club betimes next morning, but Griffin and Miss Fresham strolled in half an hour late. Major Fogey and Mrs. Passay, who had gone for a ride, forgot to turn up at all! I tried to be good-humoured over it and arrange a rehearsal for the next day.

"Oh, we can't *possibly* come to-morrow, we'are going to a picnic," said Miss Fresham. And when after a week we had managed to have three consecutive rehearsals, and I began to feel more hopeful, a notice was stuck up in the Club regarding a forthcoming Fancy Dress Dance, and I saw little more of the artists of my troupe until it was over. Then came picnics and Tournaments, and a quarrel between Mrs. Passay and Miss Fresham as whether they should wear winter or summer costumes. Miss Fresham had some difficulty in modulating the stentorian tones of a "Hubert" or a "Macbeth" to those of an old lady. Mrs. Passay resented suggestions or criticisms, receiving both with a stoney stare. Griffin thought "everything would be all right on the night", relying even for his lines on the inspiration of "the night." Major Fogey deserted Mrs. Passay for Miss Fresham at one of the rehearsals, and Mrs. Griffin sulked and Mrs. Passay threw up her part.

The role of peacemaker and the efforts to keep my temper were telling on me. I thought regretfully of those first delightful days in the open air and looked ruefully

out of the Club window as I heard Miss Fresham and young Griffin laughing gleefully as they rode by on their way to a picnic, and I reflected inwardly upon the foolishness that made me lead a life apart, and severely adjectived the flies and the wings and trestles which, with the help of peons, I was hailing up to form my stage.

At last the eventful day arrived and the room began to fill, but, to my horror, no programmes had arrived! I was just making up my mind to go on to the stage, in spite my Dunddry earies, apologise to the audience, and announce the first item, when the packet was thrust into my hands. Then came a whirl wind when Miss Griggs found that she was to be a "curtain-raiser." Miss Light-foot refused to dance so early on the programme and Miss Heavyton demanded to be put "just before the interval." Miss Dolly Dimples proved to be tractable and did not mind where she was put. "The sooner it's over the better." she laughed.

Then the Concert began. The audience was kind and did not mind that Miss Lightfoot stumbled during her dance, or that Miss Heavyton forgot her words; they cheered pretty Dolly Dimples who had no voice, and loaded her with bouquets; they laughed uproariously at Colonel Presey's comic song, and doubled the length of the first part of the programme by insisting on an encore to every item.

Then came the play, and it went with a swing from start to finish. What did it matter that Mrs. Passay forgot her cues and came on at the wrong moments? What did it matter that Miss Fresham, the *ingenue's* mother looked a child, in spite of her powdered hair and lined face? What did it matter that Major Fogey played the bold bad man in an apologetic and embarrassed manner, or that Mr. Griffin insisted on wearing a ludicrous false nose as Mrs. Passay's sentimental lover? The audience was kind and easily amused, as all hill-audiences are, and laughed all the way through, mistakes and all. I had covered myself with glory and for the moment felt amply repaid for the vexations of stage-managing when I heard on all sides, the inevitable:—

"You were simply *splendid* Mr. Irvingtree, and it's *quite* the best shew we've had for *years*."

MORAL VALUE OF SHAKESPEARE.

M. JUSSERAND AND THE BRITISH ACADEMY.

There are few English writers who know more about mediæval English literature than M. Jean Adrien Jusserand, who is now the French Ambassador at Washington. His work on "English Way faring Life in the Middle Ages" is a classic, and his monograph on the works of Langland reveals an intimate knowledge of the currents of thought which dominated the later years of the fourteenth century.

Last night (4th July) M. Jusserand was called upon to give the first annual Shakespeare lecture before the members of the British Academy at Burlington House. It is needless to say that the author of the "Literary History of the English People" handled his subject—which was "what to Expect from Shakespeare"—with consummate skill and sympathy. The chair was taken by Dr. A. W. Ward, who was elected president of the Academy, in the place of the late Dr. S. H. Butcher. And at the same meeting it may be men-

tioned that M. Jusserand was elected a Corresponding Fellow of the Academy.

M. Jusserand began by referring to the fact that, in the year in which Shakespeare was born Ronsard, addressing Queen Elizabeth, expressed the opinion that if it were possible to join England and France in firm amity—

"Vostre Angleterre avecques nostre France"—the golden age would return. If the golden age had not quite up to now the cause was perhaps that the experiment had not yet been continued long enough. When Ronsard died—Shakespeare being then 21 years of age—all France went into mourning. But when on April 25, 1616, the bell of the Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, tolled for "William Shakespeare, Gentleman," the world knew nothing of it. Seven years after his death his plays were collected, and apologetically offered to two noblemen who had been pleased to think them "something heretofore." A second edition was only wanted when nine years had elapsed.

CRITICS OF POSTERITY.

What we see now, said M. Jusserand, needs no description. With the single exception of the Bible, no book has been in the same space of time the subject of such close studies and such ardent comments as the collection of "trifles" first given to the world by Hemminge and Condell in 1623. A responsibility uncourted and unexpected by him now weighs upon the poet. No works are so familiar to the nations of the world as those of Shakespeare to-day. In their continned and increasing existence what sort of life are they leading? An anxious note has been sounded from time to time in the midst of boundless admiration and praise. Dr. Johnson had said of him.

"He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct that he seems to write without any moral purpose. Emerson again, said of Shakespeare, he was master of the revels to mankind. . . . But when the question is of life and its auxiliaries, how does it profit me?" What, then, is it that we possess? Is the treasure in this bewitching garden of the Hesperides mere glitter, or is it real gold?

For answer to this question. M. Jusserand went on to describe the conditions under which Shakespeare lived and worked. He came to London with no trade of his own. With in six years London dramatists were feeling jealous of the new play mender or maker. Five years after that he was a wealthy man. Promptitude is the salient trait of such a career. When he died, he left 37 plays—Racine only 12. Paulhan has shown what different roads lead to that supreme result—a memorable book of lasting fame. One passes through the Elysian fields, another crosses the region made doleful by Sisyphus's ceaseless groans. To the first class undoubtedly belonged Shakespeare; his fellow players who had seen him at work, said: "What he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers."

PLEASING HIS PUBLIC.

Why should he take trouble? What he expected he did actually attain; his eye was on Stratford, not on posterity. The idea of his being held later to be the Merlin of unborn times, the revealer of the unknown, the life-giver, the pride of his country, never occurred to him, and

would probably have made him laugh. All he thought was how best to please his public; a warm-hearted, boisterous, crowd, fullblooded; of unbounded patriotism, a lover of extremes, of coarse buffooneries, of common witticisms easy to understand—men all of them, of encyclopædic ignorance. The part of such a public as a contributor to his plays can scarcely be overestimated. What such people would like and what they would tolerate is what gave these plays—which he never thought of after the performance—the unique, the marvellous, the portentous shape in which we find them.

What saved him in spite of himself was that to the coarse food his groundlings wanted he added the ethereal food which has been for ages the relish of the greatest in mankind. It gave him no more trouble than to put in quibbles, or jokes, or massacres, and, because experience had shown him that while it was not all necessary to success it did not hurt.

Hence the strange nature of that work, touching all extremes, the model of all that should be aimed at, and all that should be avoided. Its hold on the world increases every year; it is famous in regions the very name of which was unknown to its author. Some of his worshippers have dogmatised on his perfections, on the safe guidance he offers in every possible trouble, and the unimpeachable solution he profounds for every difficulty. But it is not exactly so. To more than one of the gravest questions that have troubled mankind he has no answer. No problem is put oftener and more vividly before his audience than that of death and the here-after to this he has no answer. As a patriot his teachings are mixed. On those great social problems which now fill so much space in the thoughts of all he speaks as a man of incomparable genius—but he speaks as a man of his time. And he tells us absolutely nothing about himself.

MORAL EFFECT OF THE PLAYS.

Passing on to deal with the question put by Johnson and Emerson—that of the moral effect of the plays, M. Jusserand said that for the question of a moral, as for the question of rules, Shakespeare's attitude was the same. He would not go out of his way to secure or to avoid an ethical conclusion of conformity to rules, His plays were written without any moral purpose. But to conclude that they do not instruct at all is to wander from the truth. No one can escape the lesson to be drawn from the fate of Macbeth, of Coriolanus, of Antony, of Falstaff and his wild companions. In many cases, however, it seems as if the evil power so often at play in the Greek tragedies—and in real life, too—were leading the innocent to their destruction. The fate of Hamlet, Ophelia, Desdemona, Othello carries, to be sure, no concrete moral with it. Their story was written without any moral purpose—but not without any moral effect. It obliges human hearts to melt, it teaches them pity.

But let us not, said M. Jusserand in conclusion, expect from Shakespeare what he cannot give. What he can give is enough, and is of peerless value. Coming young to town, hard pressed by necessity, writing with very practical ends in view, never thinking of posterity, bound to please his public, the means of success he employed were commanded to him by circumstances. He knew what ingredients his public liked, and never felt it his duty to begrudge them their pleasure.

He could write, and had to write, with extreme rapidity, without any preliminary study or verifying and he did so without scruple. But no less fully did he allow free play to that unparalleled genius of his to an extent which was unsuspected by his contemporaries and by himself. "How does it profit me?" Emerson has said. 'What does it signify? Is it but a Twelfth Night, or a Midsummer Night's Dream or Winter's Tale?" Let Emerson answer Emerson, for the same thinker has said elsewhere: "All high Beauty has a moral element in it."

INDIAN MUSIC AND HARMONIUM.

Mr. H. Fox Strongways writes in the "Dawn Magazine":—

I have read with interest the correspondence on the subject of the Harmonium which has appeared in the "Dawn" (November 1910, March and May, 1911) and your editorial comments thereon. The divergence of opinion may be condensed thus:—Bad music is worse than none. Bad music is better than none. This is a very crude way of putting what has been very well said on both sides, but when it is stated thus nakedly without any special pleading one is perhaps more inclined to agree with both, and so to ask oneself whether there is any way out of the difficulty.

2. We must first admit to ourselves, that, to utter a common phrase, you can't make people musical by Act of Parliament; then we must examine the pleas for and the drawbacks to the employment of this instrument, which are not perhaps quite what they have been represented to be; and finally attack the problem of what may be done, which is not quite so simple as it looks.

3. The first point hardly seems to require labouring. Enlightened public opinion would scarcely reach the home in the bazar where the question arises, on what form of musical instrument shall we expend this handful of rupees. A tax would be just as likely to operate in the direction of advertisement by making the thing fashionable. In matters of taste people are to be led by example, not shepherded by precept nor driven by authority.

4. Let us consider first the advantages of the Harmonium, real, and so-called.

(*a*) That it is cheap, portable, and above all, durable are things not to be disregarded in a land of moderate purses and a difficult climate.

(*b*) That it is easy to learn cuts both ways. Many more will be tempted to take up music but fewer to excel in it. A thing easily got goes lightly, and we value possessions or powers chiefly in proportion to what they cost us. On the whole it is an argument neither for nor against.

(*c*) That it has good, 'filling' and 'sustaining' qualities is quite true, and the objection to its use as an accompaniment to song lies not so much in its particular quality of tone, though that is poor as in the lack of artistic sense shown in setting an instrument at all to duplicate the voice. If the singer plays his own accompaniment —and this is impossible on the stage— there is some hope of the voice and instrument synchronizing, and when they do and the voice is fairly powerful it must be confessed that the harmonium does very little harm; but there is practically no hope if one sings and another plays. Indian audiences seem however to have submitted complacently to this use of the

Saringhi for many generations. The unsatisfactory nature then of the harmonium as an accompaniment is no argument against the instrument.

(*d*) The suggestion that many would go on from the harmonium to the *Vina* may be partly true, though it has not been the experience in Europe that many have gone on from the banjo and cornet—both chosen primarily for the ease with which they are learned—to the piano or violin. But what we may call the 'musical proletariat,' which access to an easy instrument would encourage, would be a hopeful sign for the progress of the art. It is only where there is a good deal of music about, good, bad and indifferent, that artists spring up, just as admirals arise out of a nation of sea-farers, or founders of religion out of a contemplative people.

5. There is another argument for it which, though it may seem far fetched, I believe to be a real one. There is hardly anything that would so much forward the cause that both sides to this discussions have at heart as the introduction of a satisfactory notation. Indian music is in this respect at the stage at which European literature was before the invention of printing. It is true that the written word cheapens memory, and with printed music improvisation would fall, as in the Europe of a century ago, into gradual disuse. This would be a real loss. But it would be at least, some would think more than, counterbalanced by the advantage of breaking down the guild system by which music lingers on sporadically in a privileged family only to die out in detail. And now is the time to introduce a really serviceable notation. Those in use in various parts of the country have no such prestige as attaches, for instance, to the Devanagari character, and puts the simpler and more practical Roman letters out of court for a universal script; and there is therefore no prejudice to be overcome or sentiment to be outraged. They are all of the tonic order, which certainly meets the requirements of vocal music, though there are surprisingly few people who can sing at all readily at sight from them, but which is far too cumbrous for instrumental music. For this nothing will in the long run be adequate but some form of staff notation. This though not so quickly learned as the letter notations is much more quickly read. A band master of a Gurkha Regiment told me that his 'boys' learned it surprisingly quickly, and there they certainly were, some of them after only three months' reading therein band notes, in some cases even from manuscript. If an unlettered Gurkha of 10 or 11 can do that on an instrument that gives him plenty of other things to think about, it is an easy proportion sum to work out in what time an intelligent Indian child could do it when he merely has to decide in which place he shall put down a finger. The employment of the harmonium might therefore by making reading easy induce a desire for it and create a demand for printed music.

6. The disadvantages are not so numerous but they cut deeper. They arise from two separate causes which are not always distinguished;—the fact of Equal Temperament, and the fact of the instrument being keyed.

7. About the employment and eventual discontinuance in Europe of Just Temperament there has been some confusion of thought. Equal Temperament is condemn-

ed as "destroying the purity, fineness, and delicacy of music" and as "imperfect, and far below our musical susceptibilities." This is true; but the further step has there been taken of supposing that European music which is based on it is imperfect. Even this may be true, but only in the sense in which sensible men habitually sacrifice small details to big principles. Again those are quoted who regret the days of harmonics in Just Temperament, as if there was something wrong with harmonics as they are. This talk is vain. Equal Temperament is as good for Europe as Natural Temperament is for Asia; and it is a mistake to suppose that by belittling Equal Temperament there the case can be strengthened against its introduction here.

8. That case is strong enough on its own merit. It rests mainly on two points. First the sheer sensuous beauty derivable from having the first three harmonics—Octave, Fifth, and Third—perfectly in tune, and the ugliness which ensues if they are falsified. And secondly from the pathos of the quarter-tones, which really depends on the correct intonation of the other notes. I have never seen this question of pathos discussed, and should like, if you will allow me, to put forward what I hold to be the true view of it.

9. The harmoniousness of music depends ultimately on the physical fact that when a note, especially a low or a sonorous note is sounded, there sound with it certain other notes called Harmonics. With *Sa*, sounded for instance, on the *Tampura*, are heard—*Sa*, one Octave, *Pa*, an Octave and a Fifth, and *Ga* two Octaves and a Third above it. The series continues and can be distinguished by resonators (sound magnifiers) up to the 20th harmonic, or further; but these three are all that the average unassisted ear hears, and has in India heard for at least twenty centuries. All the twelve notes of the scale can be obtained by combinations of these three intervals. Their harmoniousness depends on this fact alone—their direct and true relationship to *Sa* the *Kharaj*, is called Natural Temperament. It is the Temperament in which every Indian instrument stands, with accuracy proportionate to the skill and experience of the player.

10. But the quarter tones cannot be obtained in this way. People have supposed that by taking a greater number of harmonics (which would be inaudible) or more complicated relationships of the three above mentioned (which would prove unintelligible) accurate positions could be found for them. But, in the first place, it is not possible even then to get satisfactory theoretical positions for them; in the second they are always sung and played as a 'passage' from one note to another; and thirdly the whole point is to show that the position theoretically obtained sounds better in practice than any other. The twelve semitones then are harmonically determinable, but the ten quarter-tones are melodic and interminate.

11. It is possible to appeal in proof of this to the average musical ear. Let any one, who knows both, ask himself what exactly is the pleasure he derives from the quarter-tones of *Bibhas* as against the diatonic notes of *Bhupkalian*, and he will probably confess to a certain feeling of pathos arising not from the mere substitution of a one note for another but from the consciousness that the full, round Major. Third and Sixth of the one have been deliberately flattened in the other, and that the ear has thereby been bulked of what it expected. Without the normal

notes of *Bhupkalian* there could have been no pathos in *Bibhas*. The quarter-tones then, whether they occur as grace notes or as substantive notes of the scale, derive their beauty from their being deliberate melodic modifications of notes that are purely in tune, and if the intonation of the tones and semitones from which they are an excursion is impure the beauty of the quarter-tones disappears. It is this effect of pathos which Indian musicians desire to retain, and which is precluded by Equal Temperament, and by the fact of the instrument being keyed to twelve notes only.

12. Again, most of the good Indian instruments are fretted. But if the notes of the scale were produced from the frets only, the music would be a very tame affair. Carnatic music, has no quarter-tones in its scale of twelve notes with sixteen names. But Seshanna and Rama Chandra produce those tones and semitones by *Varek* : they sound, that is a given note by stopping the string not at the appropriate fret but at some lower one and then sharpening to the required pitch by a side pull, and make thereby a very much finer thing of it. This is not precluded by Equal Temperament but it is by keyed instruments.

13. The harmonium is described a-suitable for simple, ordinary music without elaborate *Gamaks*. But it is not that kind of *Gamak* which consists in the addition of a neighbouring note or two that very much matters, whether quarter-tone or semitone. It is that kind of *Gamak* which makes every important, indeed every fairly slow note, vibrate under the finger, which is inseparable from Indian song and so characteristic of it, the very thing that Indians miss in European music, that a keyed instrument could not supply.

14. The quality of the tone of the harmonium has been mentioned : the instrument is alluded to playfully in Europe as the "discordium." Quality of tone depends on the harmonics, audible and inaudible. The jar which Equal Temperament makes with the former of these spoils the collective tone. I know this practically from having had once a harmonium specially tuned in Natural Temperament, and the improvement in tone quality was very noticeable. That jar is intensified when the sound stays to be examined and does not run away as on the piano.

15. To sum up, then. The harmonium is cheap, portable, durable, has sustaining power, and its introduction is likely to popularise music and the use of notation. But its tones are fixed, and this makes *Mend* and *Ghasit* impossible, though not *Gamak* ! and it stands in Equal Temperament which precludes quarter-tones as substantive notes of the scale (though not as *Gamaks*), coarsens the quality of tone, and destroys the character of the tones and semitones.

16. In order to understand what can or cannot be done by way of remedy we must be clear about Temperament, as far as such a thing can be discussed in untechnical terms. There are three Temperaments in practical use ; Natural, Just, and Equal. A keyed instrument can be turned, subject in each case to certain limitations in any one of them.

17. Natural Temperament gives, as we have seen a scale of twelve notes perfectly in tune provided you confine yourself to one starting point, that is, one *Kharaj*. But voices are of different register, so that the *Sa* which suits one will not

necessarily suit another. Hence each singer will have to have an instrument to the pitch that suits his voice, and since songs are of different compass possibly more than one such instrument.

18. Equal Temperament is a compromise by which any note can be taken as *Kharaj*, but no note except its upper *Sa* will be absolutely in tune with it.

19. Just Temperament is a half way house between the other two. A *Kharaj* is elected, and the notes which are its immediate relations and will be much wanted are kept in perfect tune with it, while the rest are out of tune in proportion as they are out of relations. If one of these latter is taken as *Kharaj* the sound is most distressing, and the howling which ensues is known as the "wolf." The practical effect of this is that, assuming *Sa* to be the note from which the best results are obtained then fairly satisfactory results are obtained from *Pa or Ma*, and moderate results from *Ri or Komal Ni*.

20. We turn now to the practical side. The harmonium is the keyed instrument which is easiest to tune ; with a little practice the owner can even do it himself. He has merely to take fut the reeds one by one and scrape one end or the other of them with a knife.

21. If he can afford more than one instrument he can have them all in Natural Temperament, *i. e.*, in perfect tune, making the *Kharaj* in one *Sa*, in another, *Ga*, in another *Tivra Ma*, and so on, according to the pitch he wants. He can effect the same purpose by tuning one instrument in Just Temperament (*i. e*, in tune for all practical purposes) and only using *Sa*, *Ma*, or *Pa* as *Kharaj*. This would probably be the best solution for the average man. If he wants to be able to play *Rags* such as *Kanada*, *Todi* and *Malkos* which involve quarter-tones he must go to further expense and get an instrument fitted with extra keys. Such as instrument with 17 notes to the Octave (each black key split into two has already been made, and experimented upon it, is said, with success: and there is no reason why 22 notes should not be provided for by splitting the black notes into three. But this is perhaps looking rather far ahead.

22. *It seems likely, then, on the whole that the Harmonium has, to use a trite phrase, 'come to stay,' and that the only thing left to do is to get rid of some of its imperfections in one or other of the above ways as the purse and the conscience of the individual musician shall dictate.* There is little fear that its presence will drive out the genuine artist. In England we have a saying "it must come to a string" meaning that when a man has music in him he is never content with anything short of the best. And meanwhile the thing that will do most to improve music is to get more people interested in it. There is however a fear that eventually, when people have had keys under their hands for sometime, they will begin experimenting with chords, as one musical family not far from Madras has already, and that will be the end of the most characteristic thing in Indian music. However, even that is better than stagnation,—a hard word, but the word that most of those I have talked with chose to describe the presenl state of things.

23. As you rightly say, sir in your editorial comment (November, 1910) the point is one of importance to all who care about the preservation and growth of Indian music: and perhaps, if the matter is put on that ground, you may care to

know of some other things that have occurred to me since I have been out here. Lookers on are said to see most of the game, but they do not always know the difficulties with which the players have to contend, so that if I make suggestions they must be in the form of queries, and others who know the facts better must supply the answers.

24. Is there any reason why the sole and the chorus which is the basis of the Bengali *Kirtan*, and of the Himalayan village songs and which is I believe popular on the stage should not be extended and encouraged? Is not Indian music too much of a 'one man show'—an exhibition, a competition, a triumph, perhaps a gloating? The rivalry of singer and drummer is amusing but not music.

The eye of the performer is looking round for something else than artistic sympathy. Elaborate *Tamas* are not always confined to their proper sphere, that of including a climax. The "achchhas" of the audience originating in the kindly motive of encouragement not seldom degenerate into flattery. All this is killed, or at any rate scotched by concerted effort; and concerted effort demands frequent rehearsal and frequent rehearsal is trying to the patience and temper; and is therefore—very good for all concerned. Most Indian music is as you say religious, and of congregational singing especially it may be said, as was well said of music in general, that "it is almost the only reasonable form of worship." There is hardly anything so delightful to the music lover as to take a humble part in a chorus or band. One of the things, for instance, I have enjoyed as much as anything has been the hymns of the Brahmo Samaj. The music was not, to my ignorance, very different from other music, and I did not understand the words, but I felt that the men enjoyed singing, that there was a sort of infection about it, and that it would have been better still if the audience could have joined in.

25. One of the things most commented on, and adversely, by Europeans is the quality of voice. Do not things move in a vicious circle? The singer strains his voice because he sings in two or even three *Saptakas*; he indulges in this compass to get variety; and he is driven to this means of getting variety because he has no contrasts, *i. e.*, registers in his voice. And is there any objection to breaking this circle at the *Saptakas*? If he were to confine himself to one and a half, or even less, as the majority of coolies, lascars, raiyots, ayahs and the rest of them do, and leave the roulades and flourishes to a *vina* playing symphonies (interpolated refrains) or to another voice of different calibre, either of which would, incidentally, give him time to breathe (and quality of voice depends almost entirely on the management of breath), would not the effect, when this form of composition had had time to grow and improve, be just as pleasing? But very likely something of this sort is done, and I have not come across it.

26. And there is another form of variety. I have heard of, but not heard, a school of Lucknow musicians who modulate 7 from one *Rag* to another without changing the *Kharaj*. May not progress lie in this direction? And is there any real reason why the *Kharaj* itself should not occasionally be changed in the course of, and at an appropriate moment in the song? The contrast of *Astai* and *Antra*, for instance, is at present one of pitch merely; and this entails a large

compass. But if the contrast could be one of *Rag*,—if for instance, the *Astai* could stand in *Asavari* on *Sa* and the *Antara* in *Bhairavi* on *Pa*, it would be just as great, and the song would lie much better within the range of the voice.

27. Or another source of variety. The relationship of *Vadi* and *Samvadi* between notes is familar. Might this not be extended to the phrase and the section more than it is—(for there are traces of it), so that one part answers another. If the phrase were limited to a range of five notes there would be no difficulty in doing this with a large number of *Rags*; and the effect of an identical passage at different revels is a most pleasing instance of that variety in unity at which all art aims.

28. *Indian music has been undoubtedly the most highly developed melodic system in the world; but it is perishing. Well, that is the appointed law; and death may be only another form of life. It does not seem certain that contact with the West and the changes that it mustbring need be detrimental to the music of the East, if it will absorb what is good and make it is own, not take it blindly without questioning. The only other course is to reject into such thiags as the Harmonium and try to reconstitute itself on the old lines.*

LANDSCAPE ART IN THE FAR EAST.

LA PHILOSOPHIE DE LA NATURE DANS L'ART D'EXTREME ORIENT. Par RAPHAEL PETRUCCI. (Paris: Laurens. 30f.)

It has been often observed that the enjoyment of landscape and the expression of that enjoyment in art and literature have been but a recent growth in the mind of Europe. As an adjunct and accessory to human occupations, landscape has been handled sensitively or powerfully by many of the masters of the main tradition of European painting; but it is significant that Michelangelo, the mightiest creator in Western art, effaces the natural back-ground to humanity altogether. And landscape themes, though so frequent in modern painting, are presumed to be of an inferier interest in themselves. When, therefore, Japanese painting first came to be known in Europe, there was a a general tendency to regard it as decorative and graceful indeed, but hardly serious, because its chief concern was with motives taken from external nature. And if our acquaintance were still confined to the more modern Japanese pictures, this estimate would continue to prevail. But in these last few years our knowledge has widened, and we have gained some glimpses at any rate of the older schools and of the Chinese masters who are the classics of this tradition. And such a painting as the "Geese," now in British Museum, or the landscapes of the Sungage which have been reproduced in Japanese publications, cannot fail to prompt a questioning spirit in us; for these be taken a profoundly serious art, not at all to be explained in terms of pretty decoration. There is something here, our instinct tells us, which we cannot understand without understanding something of the mental out look of those who produced these works.

To the theory that Buddhism was the inspiration which lifted Chinese art from a barbaric stage and gave the dominant character to its productions, M. Petrucci is strongly opposed; and indeed he gives ample proof that, on the contrary, Buddhism, while unable to modify

Indian art, was itself profoundly modified by the currents of Chinese thought. And the striking characteristic of Chinese philosophy is the impersonality of its conceptions. Its primitive cosmogony finds a close parallel in Hesoid; but while the Greeks went on to personify more and more definitely the forces of nature, Lao-tzu is content to divine, in his conception of the "eternal Way," the Universal which is the great reality behind and beyond the flux of phenomena. But this bent of mind, instead of turning men from nature, turned them to her; philosophers withdrew to the mountains, and in the misty and vast horizons sought an adumbration of the eternal and the infinite. This temper and these conceptions are the well-head of the interpretation of landscape in Chinese art; but, as M. Petrucci points out such ideas could not have had so direct and potent an influence had not the painters been for the most part poets and philosophers themselves. Confucianism, though it gave little direct inspiration to artists, and though absorbed by social problems, yet presupposed the same philosophy of nature, while it anticipated the Buddhist precepts of pity and kindness as part of a disinterested morality. When Buddhism came, therefore, it was to a soil prepared, and its work was to kindle into the emotion of fervent faith what had hitherto been intellectual conceptions, in danger of becoming arid and formal with time. So in the West Christianity absorbed and fused in its warm glow the intellectual elements it derived from Greek philosophy. But while in the West physical science has pursued its exploration of the world independently of philosophy and religion, and often opposed to them in spirit, in the Further East an impassioned study of nature has always kept the associations of religious thought, and has even owed to that thought its deepest inspiration. The gardeners of China and Japan do not conceive of the garden as it were pleasance attached to a dwelling, but seek to make it a symbol of the structure of the universe. It is the same with the landscape painters; hence the depth of mood, the synthetic unity of their paintings.—*The Times*.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Personation of Female characters on the Indian Stage.

SIR,

May I invite a discussion, through your columns, of the appropriateness of men personating female characters on the Indian Stage. The narrow basis of Indian Society has unfortunately prevented ladies from taking any part in theatrical work and it has become necessary for men to personate the other sex. While we have nothing but praise for the talent and care displayed in achieving this object, we have no hesitation in asserting that the best effects cannot be produced with such painful limitations. The soundness of our position will be evident on an adequate realisation of the obstacles that have to be surmounted. All the studied movements of an actor of real genius and the most elaborate attentions of the Green Room, can never impart to him half the sweetness and grace of a beautiful woman, even in those cases in which the person is supposed to have an appearance congenial to the task of personating the female sex. The flirtation of this incongruous creature on the stage is an exercise for the comic spirit; his tears have an air of unreality; his

address is necessarily devoid of feminine charm, if not absolutely, at least to an appreciable extent ; his voice has not in it the music of a maiden's speech ; his smile sends no thrill of happiness into the audience, and in the most critical situations of the play, there is no appeal to the soul.

It must be admitted that all acting consists in the effacement of individual peculiarities of situation and circumstance and in the natural presentation of new ones in their place. But the inborn attributes of the sexes are too distinct and crystallized to admit of absolute inter-communication or effective disguise. In the course of a close study of the performances of the Madras Dramatic Society during the last season, particularly as contrasted with the conditions of the Indian Stage, nothing struck us more pointedly than the inestimably superior advantage it enjoyed of having ladies for personating the characters of the female sex. In scenes of high-strung emotion, of love or pathos, and in the bandying of brilliant repartee, there was an inimitable beauty and naturaless to which members of the other sex cannot a spirein the most favourable circumstances. There is no denying the fact that in the present social conditions of our country, it is impossible to remedy the defect, but the ideal might be profitably kept in view.

An attempt might be made to support this peculiarity of the Indian Theatre by making a reference to the Elizabethan stage on which boys appeared as women. But it will be remembered that no success in the acting of Shakespeare's female characters was achieved till ladies came forward to personate them, and the most glorious traditions of the acting of Shakespeare's heroines are associated absolutely with them. It is idle to expect such success with the continuance of the present incongruity, and it is only on the realisation of this harmony that there could be such whole-hearted outbursts as :

> See how she moves along with every grace,
> While soul-brought tears steal down each shining face,
> She speaks ! 'tis rapture all and nameless bliss ;
> Ye Gods ! what transports e'er compared to this.

AYESHA.